

Presentation by
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PREPAREDNESS AS PART OF FOREIGN RELATIONS
Armed Services Committee (Secretary Royall's office),
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Gentlemen:

In the analysis of Russia as a problem in our foreign relations, I do not know of anything more important than the part which armed force plays in the thinking and plans of the Russians. At the same time, this is a very intricate matter. The answers are not at all the obvious ones. It is a matter on which people here in this country repeatedly go wrong. For that reason I am glad that you are giving it your attention this afternoon, and that I have this opportunity to let you know how some of us see it who have had to do with Russian matters in recent years.

I can remember that when I was in Germany during the war there was a joke going around among the Germans in which the question was asked what the difference was between National Socialism and Russian Communism. The answer was that in Russia it was colder. That was a good enough joke, and there is a lot to it. But when comes to military matters, it is not entirely accurate. But I would like to emphasize first of all the great

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danger that lies in thinking of Russia as just a larger and improved 1948 model of Hitler's Germany.

The Bolsheviks are a power-minded group. They want to extend it as far as they can. But they do not expect, or even wish, to accomplish this by forthright military conquest. They wish to accomplish it by infiltration, by boring from within, by the use of internal political factions in other countries, composed of citizens of those countries. In other words, their offensive against the independence of other nations is a political, not a military, offensive.

You may ask: Why do they reject military conquest as a means of achieving this end? Is it because they have humanitarian scruples which the Germans lacked? The answer is definitely no. There are several reasons; and they are all strictly practical. In the first place, they are extremely cautious. Their own regime in Russia rests on relatively slim popular support. They know that any major conflict, and particularly one which would draw the Red Army far from Russia's borders, would represent a danger to the stability of their rule in Russia. They know that it is not good for the Red Army to come into too close contact with the advanced countries of western Europe. They are already faced with a serious problem in their

in their garrisons in Eastern Europe, where the standard of living is relatively low and the level of technical and cultural achievements unimpressive. If their troops were to move farther into Western Europe, this problem would become greater still.

In the second place, being cautious people, the Russians want not just power with responsibility, but a maximum of power with a minimum of responsibility. They are smart enough to know that military conquest is not the way to get that sort of power. When you conquer a country militarily you stir up all sorts of emotions which complicate rather than facilitate the exercise of any long term permanent influence over that country. And the mere fact that your flag is raised over that territory and that your uniforms appear in the streets means that you have assumed an open, formal, and serious part of responsibility for what goes on there. It also means that you have a problem on your hands to determine the circumstances and arrangements under which you are going to get out again.

For these reasons, I strongly doubt that Soviet plans envisage anything like an unprovoked Soviet military conquest of Western Europe. By this I do not mean

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that there is no chance of the Russians becoming involved in hostilities in that area. There is such a chance. There are several possibilities which might lead to that result. The men in the Kremlin are cool and calculating individuals; but many of the satellite groups which they are using for their purposes, particularly in the Balkans, are hot-headed, unrealistic people, who can hardly be depended upon for restraint and coolness of judgment. Furthermore, there is always the possibility that the Russians might resort to armed action in Europe as a measure of defense if they felt themselves pushed too hard in the Eastern European area and became panicky.

But what I wish to emphasize is that it is not their plan or their desire at this time to do this job by armed conquest; that they wish to avoid any major armed conflict; and that if they get into one it will be against their will and not as a result of their design.

The same applies in the case of Asia. I do not think that they expect to have to use the Red Army as such in Asia; and I doubt that they would do so unless they were very hard pressed and unless, in fact, some independent force really threatened to challenge their political control in Outer Mongolia or in Northern Manchuria.

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Now how about United States policy in the face of this situation? Our immediate objective with regard to the Soviet Union is to see that their aim of seizing further countries from within is not realized--that they do not succeed in doing this. Of course, we should also hope that some day the countries they have already subjugated--the satellite countries of eastern and central Europe--might also be liberated and restored to normal self-government. But that is rather a long-term objective. Today we must recognize that we tacitly acquiesced, as part of the whole conclusion of the war, in the Red Army advance into those countries and in the establishment of Soviet political control in the wake of the Red Army. To challenge this fact today would carry us very far afield--farther, I think, than national interest or public opinion or a reasonable respect for the consistency of our own policy would warrant, so that for the time being I think our main efforts must be directed to the areas which lie this side of the high-water mark of Soviet military advance during the war. U.N. and Russian policies can't be done until they are convinced.

Now, how do we expect to proceed, as a matter of United States policy, to prevent the success of the

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Soviet efforts to seize control in these countries? The means which we have of influencing events directly in those countries are much smaller and fewer than most people in this country realize. That hangs together with our form of government, with our democratic system, and our method of doing international business. We simply lack many of the techniques by which you intervene successfully in the internal political affairs of other countries. Our propaganda instrument is rudimentary and relatively weak. The educated classes from one end of Europe to the other have already been affected to some extent by hostile propaganda and by the natural dislike for a "rich uncle". They are cynical about our motives and skeptical as to our general reliability. We have no political movements in Europe working in our behalf. Our purposes in Europe are basically defensive. It would be hard to develop them into the basis of a militant political movement which might successfully cope with Communism. In general, we are ill-equipped to operate with clandestine or conspiratorial methods, and those are the methods by which these things have to be done.

This is why our main effort has to be to help the natural forces which are opposing communism in the countries which are threatened. This is basically what we are

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are trying to do. We know that the Marshall Plan will have an important effect along these lines if we give aid promptly and generously and wisely. Here, as in our entire policy, our aim is to give hope and reassurance and a sense of security to the people who are naturally on our side, to the people who wish to oppose the advance of communist forces in their own countries.

Why can we not use armed force to aid these countries?

Now, where does armed force fit into all this, on our side? It fits in in two ways.

In the first place, it is absolutely essential, in fact vital, to what we are trying to do that there should exist in this country an armed establishment which everyone will respect--that we should maintain, in other words, a military posture which will make it evident to every power in the world that it would be unwise to tangle with us. I am not going to try to spell out what this establishment should be. That is not my business. I would only stress that it should include strong enough forces in being so that everyone would know that we could pack a mean punch in a short time on any limited theater of operations, even if far from our own shores, and at the same time, enough reserve strength and such facilities for training and mobilization so that everyone would know that

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that we could pack a mean punch in a short time on any limited theater of operations, even if far from our own shores, and at the same time, enough reserve strength and such facilities for training and mobilization so that everyone would know that we could mobilize for a major armed effort swiftly and effectively. If we can have such an establishment in this country, its shadow is bound to fall upon all those countries where the issue of communism versus national independence is being fought out. That shadow already exists--although probably not by any means as persuasive and as clean cut as we would like it to be. And wherever it falls it already affects deeply the course of events. Those who are resisting communist pressures take confidence from it. Those who are associated with the communist pressures glance anxiously at it and it has a tendency to cramp their style.

Please remember what was said earlier. The Russians do not want a major armed conflict at this time, with us or with anybody else. Their stooges in other countries know this; and they know that they have no authority from the Kremlin to do anything which would bring American armed forces nearer to Russia or would involve Russia in a conflict with United States armed forces at this moment. The fear that they might do this therefore acts as an inhibition

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inhibition on their activities and causes them to observe a certain modicum of restraint which they would not otherwise observe.

This modicum may not be great. It may represent only a margin. But like many other margins, it may be of decisive influence at the vital moment.

Therefore I must reiterate that the maintenance of adequate armed force in this country is absolutely essential to the successful promulgation of our policy toward Russia. And since that policy is directed sincerely and hopefully toward the avoidance of war, the maintenance of an effective armed establishment in this country has a vital and real importance for the prevention of war.

The second function of this armed establishment, as we see it from the angle of relations with Russia, is of course to make sure that if war comes, despite all our efforts, we win it. On this I need to say nothing further.

Let me sum up, then. The Russians are embarked on a program which we feel obliged to oppose. This is a political program in which they do not expect to use military force on an international scale. It would be neither wise nor effective for us to attempt, except

possibly

possibly in very exceptional circumstances, to use our armed forces to combat these activities at this stage of the game. In many respects they are not susceptible to being combatted by armed force; and any failure on our part to recognize this fact might cause more harm than good. But in our efforts to oppose these Soviet objectives in other ways, that is, by measures short of war, it is vitally important to us that we have in this country a force in being, capable of projecting a warning and sobering shadow over the surface of international events. Granted this prerequisite, and with reasonable unity and discipline and self-restraint on the part of all of us in this Government who bear any responsibility with respect to foreign policy, I personally feel that we have a good chance of winning this battle without ever actually having to employ our forces on a major scale.

We cannot be absolutely sure of that. We must recognize that the unexpected can play a vital role, sometimes, in international events. We must recognize that perhaps we will not be quite good enough or quite skillful enough to accomplish all that we want by diplomatic means, or that perhaps the forces we are trying to help

to help abroad will prove too weak to be helped effectively. In any of these events, we might find ourselves faced with a situation in which we would have to use our armed establishment. And I need not tell you that when we use it it has to be strong enough to be successful. And that is true from the policy sense, and not just from the sense of a military exercise.*

It was never more true than it is today that war, as Clausewitz remarked, is only a continuation of policy by other means. In the old days, to lose a war was to suffer a set-back in your foreign policy. Today, to lose a war is to lose the right to conduct foreign policy at all for a long, long time to come--and perhaps even worse.